

school student to be killed just this year. Twenty-eight students, Mr. President. I repeat, 28 young lives are now snuffed out.

Last Tuesday was an equally tragic day in the city. On Tuesday, young Franco Avilla, a tenth grader at Roosevelt High School on Chicago's west side, was shot to death. Instead of being the exception, shooting deaths of our school children have now become the rule. Last school year, 26 Chicago public school students were shot during the full 9-month school year. Well, this year, Chicago public schools have already surpassed this sad milestone, and it is only March.

When Franco left his house last Tuesday afternoon, his last words to his father were: "Dad, I'll be back." He never came home. Gun violence took his life.

We must take action now to get these weapons off our streets and end the senseless slaughter of our young people.

Guns played an equally devastating role in the life of Juan Pitts. Mr. PITTS' son, Kendrick, was a 17-year-old student at Bowen High School when he was shot down last month alongside two other Chicago public school students—15-year-old Raheem Washington and 13-year-old Johnny Edwards.

The deaths of these young men are atrocious. Yet the pain and tragedy of the Pitts family has only doubled since then. Two weeks ago, Kendrick's brother, Carnell, who graduated from Bowen High School last year, was shot to death at a gathering on Chicago's south side.

Gangs and gun violence go hand-in-hand. Our youth should be carrying school books instead of firearms. Yet in so many instances, our failure to invest in the education of our youth on the front end is at the root of the violence and imprisonment, as a result, on the back end. Our failure to enact serious, sensible gun control measures make it much more likely these tragedies are going to occur again and again.

We tend to think of gun violence as a problem of large urban areas—a symptom of America's big cities. Well, the truth is, no community is immune to such senseless behavior. I am from a small town. I was born and raised in Centralia, IL, which is about 100 miles south of our State capital of Springfield. I know how close-knit these small-town families and small towns are. I know how safe these towns seem to be.

Sadly, two recent events proved otherwise.

A recent shooting in Maryville, IL, which is about an hour-and-a-half drive from my hometown of Centralia, reminds us that the dangers associated with guns affect us all, no matter where we live, work, pray or go to school.

Two weeks ago, on a quiet Sunday morning, a 27-year-old gunman walked straight down the aisle of Maryville's First Baptist Church and shot and

killed Pastor Winters during the normal weekly service. Just days later, in Samson, AL, we saw the all-too-familiar word flash across our TV screens again—"massacre." A 28-year-old gunman killed a total of 10 individuals and injured many more before he finally took his own life during an hour-long rampage.

The 10 individuals who died, whose lives ended on that tragic Tuesday afternoon, were going about their daily routine without the slightest thought that their lives would end that very day. The many more who were wounded by those gunshots surely never thought they, too, would be victims—survivors, nonetheless—of gun violence.

The stark truth is, everybody is a victim of gun violence. Every Senator in this body has constituents who have been touched by this issue, and it is our responsibility as lawmakers and leaders of this great Nation to ensure assault and semiautomatic weapons do not take the lives of so many innocent victims. We must take action to stop the senseless killing on our Nation's streets, in our communities, at our schools, and in our places of worship. We must take action to increase our gun control measures and decrease our gun violence. Ultimately, by doing so, we will be taking action to ensure our children, our families, and our communities live in a safer place in America.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BURRIS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BURRIS. I ask unanimous consent the time of the quorum call be equally divided.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BURRIS. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to speak up to 10 minutes as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE BUDGET

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, President Obama's budget is sending mixed messages to the American people. I know he faces a very difficult time, as do we all. I know he is trying to get the best counsel he can, and I applaud him for that. I do not have a degree in mac-

roeconomics and I know some of the finest macroeconomists in the country are on President Obama's team. I do not know anybody, however, on President Obama's team who has ever run a small business. So, if I may be so presumptuous, I would like to share some of the realities of running a small business with the President's team and see if we can't understand why many of the things that are in the President's budget, in fact, will have directly the opposite effect than he wants.

It is the goal of the administration to increase job creation and spur economic growth. That is a legitimate goal. However, we must understand this about how you increase job creation: You must be sure small businesses are properly taken care of because small businesses provide more than half the jobs Americans hold and small businesses create the new jobs. When large businesses start downsizing, buying people out and laying people off, where do they go? In many instances, those who do not go on unemployment end up in small businesses.

If I may offer my own credentials, I have run businesses that were as small as two people—myself and my secretary. I was recruited to be the CEO—a very high-powered title—of a business that had only four employees. I made number five. We grew that business to the point that there were thousands of employees and the business was ultimately listed on the New York Stock Exchange. So I offer that to the macroeconomists on President Obama's team, to say that if you want to increase jobs and if you want to increase economic growth and thereby increase tax revenue to the Federal Government, you should pay attention to small business.

One of the worst things that can happen to you when you are trying to grow a small business is to make money. That sounds counterintuitive, but it is true. Why? Because you need that money to finance your growth, but the Government shows up and says we want ours in taxes. So you want the tax rate to be as low as possible. The business that I described, that went from four employees to the New York Stock Exchange, was built during what the New York Times and other critics called the decade of greed because the top tax rate was 28 percent, and they thought that was terrible. It was only 28 percent, the top marginal tax rate? That is awful. That only goes for the greedy Americans.

That meant that for every dollar we earned in that business, we got to keep 72 cents of it, which we could use to finance the growth of the business. That business was grown with internally generated funds. Yes, we had a bank line and yes we drew on the bank line, but it was the internally generated funds that made it possible for us to create those thousands of jobs.

Because there were a small number of us in that business, we took the